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SCIENTIFIC MEDICAL SESSION HELD AT TASHKENT

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Opening Session

The scientific medical session called by the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR jointly with the Ministry of Health Uzbek SSR was held at Tashkent 20-25 September 1954. This session was devoted to problems of regional pathology.

About 30 reports dealing with problems of leishmaniases, malaria, helminthosis, brucellosis, and problems of public health organizations were given at the meeting. Prominent Soviet scientists who are active in the medical and biological field came from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and other cities. Among the participants were members and corresponding members of the [illegible] Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, scientists from [illegible] Transcaucasian Soviet republics, heads of public health institutions and scientific research institutes, and physicians engaged in practical work. More than 1,000 persons participated in the meeting. Among those who took part in the meeting was a large group of foreign visitors composed of scientists and physicians from countries of the Near East, the Far East, and Southeast Asia. Included in this group were members of a delegation of medical workers of the People's Republic of China, representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, of the Mongolian People's Republic, and delegates sent by medical workers of Indonesia and other countries.

The meeting was opened with an introductory address given by Prof V. G. Krotkov, vice-president of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR. Krotkov emphasized the great significance of the meeting in making a major contribution to the development of public health and medical science. Krotkov stated that the meeting would discuss the most important problems of regional pathology and medical parasitology, and would summarize the extensive experience accumulated by Soviet scientists and practical physicians, in this manner paving the way

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toward future progress. Kh. Yusupova, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Tashkent Municipal Soviet and Honorary Physician of the Uzbek SSR, greeted the meeting with the following words:

"The working people of the capital of Uzbekistan are proud that the scientific session of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR and of the Ministry of Health Uzbek SSR, in which delegations of foreign scientists are participating, is being held in their city. In world medical literature, old Tashkent was described as one of the foci of mass outbreaks of epidemic diseases, in other words, as a city which lacked the most elementary necessities of life for the common people. At present, thanks to the care exerted by the Communist Party and the government, the capital of Uzbekistan has been transformed into one of the largest industrial and cultural centers of the USSR. Socialistic Tashkent has an extensive network of medical institutions. At present, the nations of the Soviet East boast a large number of medical workers, including physicians, docents, doctors of medical sciences, and professors. Before the revolution, physicians of Uzbek, Tadzhik, Kazakh, or Turkmen nationality were almost unknown in Central Asia."

The next address was given by M. D. Kovrigina, Minister of Health USSR. Kovrigina expressed confidence that the meeting would not only contribute to medical science and practical public health, but would also serve to reinforce the scientific and cultural contacts between Soviet scientists and foreign scientists.

Academician Ye. N. Pavlovskiy presented a report on natural reservoirs of transmissive and parasitic diseases. Reports on the basic problems of regional pathology and medical parasitology were given by Professors P. A. Petrishcheva and M. P. Chumakov, Corresponding Members of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR.(1)

Pavlovskiy's Report

On 14 September 1954, Meditsinskiy Rabotnik published in advance the following report scheduled to be presented by Academician Ye. N. Pavlovskiy at the Tashkent meeting:

"The Scientific Session of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR and of the Ministry of Health Uzbek SSR will be opened at Tashkent on 20 September 1954. This meeting acquires a great significance in view of its program and its participants. Representatives of 18 foreign countries of Asia have been invited. Scientists from all Soviet Central Asiatic Republics will give reports at the meeting.

"The principal subject matter of the reports will be regional pathology with emphasis on successes achieved by the USSR public health service on the basis of a thorough study of the epidemiology of transmissive and other diseases. The reports will show how practical physicians apply in prophylactic work results of the theoretical study of diseases comprising data pertaining to problems of the pathogenesis, clinical aspects, therapy, and epidemiology of the diseases. These studies are being carried out with special consideration of the influence which remnants of traditional ways of life may exert on public health and medicine.

"In the former Russian empire the majority of the native population of Central Asia, particularly the population of remote villages, did not receive any medical aid and had to be satisfied with treatment given by native healers and priests. Characteristics of the regional pathology of individual areas of Central Asia situated at a distance from the few available roads and large cities were not known. In those areas malaria and other tropical diseases, such as cutaneous leishmaniases, were prevalent. All this imposed on the USSR public

health service a multitude of tasks of a scientific and practical character. The problems involved in these tasks are to be discussed in the reports which will be given at the session. I shall have the honor of presenting the principal report entitled 'Diseases Having Natural Foci - Rickettsioses, Hemorrhagic Fevers Caused by Viruses, Spirochetoses, and Leishmaniases (Their Epidemiology, Clinical Aspects, and Control).'

"In my report I shall pay attention principally to outlining the basic precepts of the theory of natural reservoirs of diseases transmitted by blood-sucking insects and ticks. These basic precepts were developed in the measure in which data were accumulated during the course of work done by our expeditions in Central Asiatic republics between 1928 and 1953. Beginning with 1953, the Tadzhik base formed the principal center of our investigations. Subsequently, this base became an affiliate of the Academy of Sciences USSR. This affiliate has now been transformed into the Academy of Sciences of the Tadzhik SSR. The work done at the stationary hospital of the affiliate was supplemented by data collected by expeditions dispatched by central institutes, including the former All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine, the Military Medical Academy, the Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences USSR, and other scientific institutions.

"The success of work based on the scientific data obtained in the course of practical activities dealing with the control of transmissive and parasitic diseases depended to a large extent on factors of a social nature, namely the degree of civilization achieved by the peoples of Central Asia inhabiting remote regions. It is generally known that these peoples were transferred after the October revolution from conditions which almost corresponded to feudalism to the conditions of a socialist state, bypassing the difficult stage of capitalism. This transition contributed to the development of literacy, improvement of the economic conditions of living, and successful control of diseases. The account of the great progress achieved under the Soviet government will be very clear and convincing to our foreign guests.

"The theory of natural reservoirs of transmissive diseases acquires increasing significance for the understanding of the geographic distribution of such diseases and the success to be expected from prophylactic measures, particularly the disinfestation of territories where natural foci of these diseases occur.

"It is remarkable how the theoretical precepts of the natural reservoirs theory make it possible to establish that an ever-increasing number of diseases have natural reservoirs. The theory in question is closely connected with terrain epidemiology and regional epidemiology. It explains the reasons why human beings may catch exogenic diseases even in localities which were never visited by human beings before.

"It is obvious that the susceptibility of nonimmune, freshly exposed populations to diseases that have not yet been studied or were little known formerly in their natural foci connected with some definite geographic terrain, cannot be regarded as something unavoidable. On the contrary, the occurrence of such new diseases forces medical men and biologists to carry out ecological and parasitological studies on conditions of existence of natural reservoirs of the diseases with respect to the susceptibility of human beings to these diseases. The results of such studies form the basis of protection against the infections involved.

"The most thorough method of protection would be elimination of the foci of infection. Prior to doing this, one must investigate in detail the characteristics of the foci in question. When the foci are of a diffuse nature, it is difficult to disinfest the territory within a short period of time. For instance, how can one free the ground carpet of the deciduous northern forests (taiga) from

ticks that transmit the virus of tick encephalitis, if the forest extends over hundreds of kilometers or even larger distances? Of particular importance in such cases are measures for the individual protection of human beings against attacks by ticks. The territory in question is freed of natural foci of tick encephalitis when the forest has been made inhabitable by clearing it, construction settlements, planting vegetable gardens, and cultivating fields. Considerable time is required for this.

"On the other hand, when the primary foci of infections are restricted in their extent, as for instance the burrows of rodents in hot deserts or semi-deserts which form natural foci of the desert form of cutaneous leishmaniasis (Borovskiy's disease), rapid disinfestation of the territory involving extermination of the rodents and destruction of the burrows by digging can be readily accomplished within a distance of 1-2 kilometers from settlements. The degree of dependence of the natural focus on the geographic terrain is of great importance. While some diseases do not migrate from their natural foci to human dwellings or settlements, other diseases are transferred into the close proximity of human beings. In the latter case the human beings, because of ignorance, create favorable conditions for this transfer themselves. This, for instance, applies to Japanese encephalitis. It is remarkable that tularemia and some other diseases are basically infections having natural foci, because the reservoir of tularemia bacilli between epidemics is formed by Ixodidae ticks of the genus Dermacentor.

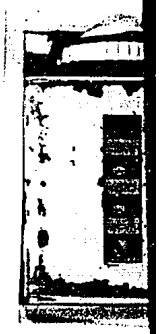
"The number of diseases for which the existence of natural reservoirs has been established on the territory of the USSR is very great. The existence of the following diseases of virus etiology as diseases with natural reservoirs has been established: tick encephalitis, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, and most likely, pappataci fever and psittacosis. Among rickettsioses, tick-transmitted typhus and rickettsioses for which Trombicula and Gamasidae mites function as vectors, nephrosonephritis of rickettsial etiology in which Gamasidae mites function as vectors, Q-fever, rickettsial pox, and many other diseases may be regarded as infections having natural reservoirs.

"All this has been established in almost 25 years of work. The fact that representatives of all principal medical specialties were engaged in work in this new field contributed to the result that such complex problems as that of neuroinfections in the Far East were essentially solved within a very short period of time i.e., during a period of work involving two or three seasons only. This applies to tick encephalitis and some other infections.

"Knowledge of the correlation between diseases having natural reservoirs and occurrence of a definite type of terrain is important in the sense that one may, from the nature of the terrain, determine beforehand that there is a danger of epidemics and take general prophylactic measures in time, particularly when the territory is being settled by new inhabitants who have not yet developed on immunity.

"Of particular importance is the development of measures for maintaining a territory, once freed of natural foci of infections, in this condition by organizing an appropriate inspection service. The Tashkent session will give to our guests, in addition to a general idea of the achievements of Soviet medicine in a part of the former Russian empire which was very backward, substantial knowledge which they can use in organizing scientific and practical medical work at home.

"The theory of natural reservoirs of diseases acquires particular significance in that respect. Similar investigations carried out in Asia, a continent which has a wide variety of natural conditions, will contribute much that is of importance to the control of diseases which are regional in character.



"Soviet public health service and the medical and biological sciences in the USSR are attaining increasing successes in theoretical and practical work. One ought to hope that the Tashkent session will result in the development of new forms and methods of control of transmissive and parasitic diseases."(2)

Reports on Malaria

Prof. P. G. Sergieyev, Active Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, presented a report entitled "The Scientific Basis of the Elimination of Malaria in the USSR" [cf. Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 75, 17 Sep 1954, p 2]. He emphasized that Soviet scientists and Soviet public health organs have achieved great successes in the field of prophylaxis and therapy of malaria. Soviet epidemiologists are now armed with new and highly effective agents for the prevention and treatment of this disease and with active chemical preparations for the control of its vectors.

All measures for the control and prophylaxis of malaria are financed by the state. As a result of carrying out planned antimalaria measures, and as a result of the rise in standards of living of the population of the Soviet Union, malaria as a mass disease has been eliminated in the USSR.

Reports on the control of malaria in the Uzbek SSR [cf. R. Sagatov, Minister of Health Uzbek SSR, "The Fruits of Great Care," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 75, 17 Sep 54, p 2] and in the Khirgiz SSR were made. These reports furnished a striking illustration of the success of public health measures in the republics of the Soviet East and of the attention paid to public health by the Soviet state.

Other scientific reports dealing with the problem of malaria were also heard. In addition to Soviet specialists, foreign scientists took part in the discussions.

G. G. Makover, who represented a group of Polish medical scientists present at the meeting, gave a report in which he characterized therapeutic agents active against acute forms of the malaria infection. He also described his experience in treating malaria patients.

Dr Bapu Ananta Svamu Rao, Deputy Director of the Indian Antimalaria Institute, stated in his report that malaria has been one of the most serious public health problems in India for a long time and that the occurrence of this disease is an obstacle to the development of the country. At present, a state plan for the control of malaria has been developed. Dr Rao gave a detailed account of the activity of a number of Indian antimalaria institutions. Prof Lin Chao-chih of the First Shanghai Medical Institute reviewed in detail antimalaria work in China. Lin Chao-chih stated that Chinese epidemiologists have benefited greatly from the experience of Soviet physicians in applying therapeutic and chemoprophylactic measures.(3)

Other Reports

During the final part of the meeting, problems of the control of helminthoses and brucellosis and also organizational problems pertaining to public health were discussed.

The general principles governing the development of helminthology in the USSR were outlined in great detail in a report given by Academician K. I. Skryabin. According to Skryabin, statistical data show that helminthoses are widespread in both hemispheres. However, a planned and thorough fight with helminthoses is being carried out in the USSR only. This is due to the peculiarities of the socialistic regime, constant improvements in the standard of living, the general prevalence of a high level of culture, and improvement of the education of the people in medical and sanitary matters. At present, the

groundwork has been laid for the extermination of a number of helminthoses, that is, the parasitic helminths will be completely exterminated in all phases of their biological cycle.

After summarizing extensive clinical data, Prof V. P. Pod'yapol'skaya, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, said in her report that helminthoses exert a direct and pronounced influence on the course of many infectious diseases, lending to them a more acute character. She added that infection with helminths contributes to the development of chronic forms of diseases and to the carrying of bacilli.

Problems arising in connection with the control of ancylostomatoses and experience in this control, particularly as far as ancylostomatoses affecting miners are concerned, were discussed in reports by Prof N. G. Kamalov (Tbilisi), Yu. Sh. Ibragimov (Kirghiz SSR), and S. M. Dursunova (Turkmen SSR). The successes achieved in the therapy and prophylaxis of ancylostomatoses indicate that it is expedient to consider complete extermination, in the near future, of the parasites causing this group of diseases.

The practical value of the method of extermination was illustrated in a report by A. A. Kadyrov dealing with the complete elimination of dracunculosis (rishta) in the Uzbek SSR.

The session heard with great interest a report by Prof Tsoy Ven Sek [Ch'oe Yun Sik?], Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This report dealt with the clinical aspects of lung distomatosis. Prof Yu Tsen-ten told about the prophylaxis and therapy of schistosomiasis, a disease of the fluke type which is widespread in some regions of China. Prof S. Suvi, Director of the Institute of Hygiene at Rangoon, discussed sanitary measures carried out in Burma. Survi's report dealt particularly with the reduction of the incidence of helminthoses.

During the fifth session of the scientific meeting, problems pertaining to brucellosis were discussed in detail [cf. G. Rudnev, "The Pathogenesis, Clinical Aspects, and Therapy of Brucellosis," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 74, 14 Sep 54, p 2]. The authors of reports and the participants in the discussions emphasized that the experience which has been accumulated in the prophylaxis and therapy of brucellosis by the method of eliminating reservoirs formed by the principal transmitters, i.e., farm animals, and by the immunization of human beings with the aid of a live avirulent vaccine, makes it possible to consider the problem of eliminating this disease entirely. This will be done first of all in the sections of the country where animal husbandry is of importance.

The participants were greatly interested in the closing session of the meeting, which was devoted to the discussion of organizational problems of public health. I. G. Kochergin, Deputy Minister of Public Health USSR and president of the Scientific Council of this ministry, presented an extensive report on the scientific basis of Soviet public health [cf. I. Kochergin, "The Scientific Basis of Soviet Public Health Protection," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 78, 28 Sep 54, p 2]. Prof V. M. Zhdanov, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, gave a detailed report on the scientific basis of the prophylaxis of infectious diseases in the USSR.

The great changes which have taken place in the republics of Central Asia were discussed in the reports made by R. S. Sagatov, Minister of Health Uzbek SSR [cf. R. Sagatov, "The Fruits of Great Care," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 75, 17 Sep 1954, p 2], by S. R. Karynbayev, Minister of Health Kazakh SSR [cf. S. Karynbayev, "Our Immediate Tasks," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 75, 17 Sep 1954, p 2], and by Z. M. Dzhamalova, Deputy Minister of Health Uzbek SSR.

These reports stated that many diseases which were prevalent in Central Asia before the revolution have now been eliminated entirely. Similar data

were presented by K. Akhmedov, Minister of Public Health of the Tadzhik SSR, and F. Nurgaziyev, Minister of Health of the Kirghiz SSR.

Dr Lu Tsui-ch'in, head of the Chinese medical delegation and chief of the Public Health Administration of Southwestern China, presented a report dealing with the development of public health protection in China [Lu Tsui-ch'in, "The Public Health Service of New China," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 79, 1 Oct 54, p 3; cf. also Lu Tsui-ch'in, "Urgent Problems", Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 76, 21 Sep 1954, p 4]. Dr Lu Tsui-ch'in stated that the work on the improvement of public health which is being done in China is a part of a general effort to raise the economic and cultural level of the country. The public health activities are based on four leading principles: prophylaxis, which is the main principal; public health protection with particular attention to the health of workers, peasants, and soldiers: organization and unification of all physicians: and efforts to get the mass of people to participate in carrying out sanitation measures.

Prof Tson Hua-lan, Chief Physician of the Peking People's Hospital, discussed the experience acquired in the course of scientific investigations and practical work in the prophylaxis and therapy of kala-azar [leishmaniasis], which until recent times has done a lot of damage to the Chinese people. Dr Gurzhavyn Tuvan, [transliterated from Russian] Minister of Health, Mongolian People's Republic, told about public health progress in that republic [cf. Gurzhavyn Tuvan, "Invaluable Help", Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Vol 17, No 76, 21 Sep 1954, p 4].

Professor Krishnan, Director of the All-Indian Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, after expressing his gratitude to the Soviet government and to the organizers of the scientific meeting, discussed the state of medical activities in India and the problem of further development of public health protection in that country. An interesting report on the prophylaxis of yaws, a disease which is prevalent in Indonesia, was given by the head of the Indonesian medical delegation, Professor Sutopa. Prof Min Tsey, Dean of the Medical Faculty of Rangoon University, stated that the progress of public health in the USSR had made a great impression on him. He referred particularly to the elimination in the USSR within a short time of many transmissive and parasitic infections. He said that the achievement of Soviet scientists and physicians will serve as an inspiration to medical workers of his country.

In reviewing the work of the meeting, Professor Krotkov, Vice-President of the Medical Academy of Sciences USSR, stated that the meeting not only served as a means of summarizing experience acquired in the study of the most complex and most important needs of public health, namely those arising in connection with problems of regional pathology, but also formulated concrete problems to be solved by planning further scientific investigations and developing effective prophylactic measures. After referring to the high quality of reports made by foreign scientists from countries of the Far East and Southeast Asia, he expressed the hope that these scientists will succeed in solving the foremost problems of regional pathology which confront them.(4)

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SOURCES

1. "The Opening of the Scientific Session at Tashkent," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, Moscow, Vol 17, No 76, 21 Sep 54, p 1

2. Ye. Pavlovskiy, "For Further Scientific Research," Ibid., No 74, 14 Sep 54, p 2

3. "The Scientific Session at Tashkent," Ibid., No 77, 24 Sep 54, p 1

4. Ibid., No 78, 28 Sep 54

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